

Statement by Edward J. Markey (D-MA)
December 4, 2001
Administrative Simplification Compliance Act, HR 3323

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the language in the Administrative Simplification Compliance Act, HR 3323 which exempts from delay the compliance date for the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy Rule.

In 1996 Congress made a promise to the American people that by February 2001 medical privacy protections would be in place. Despite the efforts of privacy opponents who lobbied this Administration heavily to postpone the effective date of these protections, the final privacy rule went forward in April 2001 – a victory for patients, doctors and the quality of our nation's health care. But we're not quite out of the woods yet – the Administration has indicated that certain sections of this rule are to be opened for public comment early next year. It is my hope that this plan will not serve to undermine the strong privacy protections already in place and that the compliance date for these protections will not be postponed.

The date of compliance for these first time, fundamental medical privacy protections is April 2003. While we can all agree that these protections don't go far enough in providing comprehensive privacy for medical records they are a good first step.

I praise Rep. Hobson, the author of HR 3323, for including language to preserve the compliance date for the HIPAA privacy protections. Americans have waited far too long for medical privacy and they deserve it as soon as possible. I thank you.

#